



PRESS NOTICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**STROM THURMOND AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE
IN LAW ENFORCEMENT**

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA -- United States Attorney Bill Nettles' Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee hosted the annual Strom Thurmond Awards for Excellence in Law Enforcement Luncheon today at Fort Jackson Officers' Club, Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Solicitor Strom Thurmond, Jr. addressed more than 100 state, local, and federal law enforcement officers at the awards banquet.

The following South Carolina law enforcement officers received the 2011 awards:

City - Chief John E. Ewing, Jr., Bishopville Police Department

County - Commander William S. Knowles, 15th Circuit Drug Enforcement Unit

Federal - Assistant Special Agent in Charge William W. Douglas, Drug
Enforcement Administration - SC

State - Lieutenant Richard R. Gregory, South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

The Strom Thurmond Awards for Excellence in Law Enforcement were established by Senator Strom Thurmond in 1983 to recognize law enforcement officers whose performances demonstrate the highest ideals of excellence in professional law enforcement. An annual award is given in each of four categories: (1) City Officer; (2) County Officer; (3) State Officer; and (4) Federal Officer. An awards committee composed of representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Strom Thurmond Foundation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, along with a police chief and sheriff who have received the award selected the recipients from nominations received from across the state.

In presenting the awards, United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated, "It is indeed an honor to recognize these four outstanding officers. Each of these officers exemplifies the best in law enforcement, serving their agencies, this state and our nation with distinction, integrity, and character, making tremendous personal sacrifices to ensure just enforcement."

City Recipient

Chief John E. Ewing, Jr. Bishopville Police Department

Chief John E. Ewing, Jr. was born in Hartsville, SC, and graduated from Gaffney High School. He attended the University of South Carolina on a football scholarship and earned his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice in 1994. Upon graduation from USC, he was hired by the Richland County Sheriff's Department. After graduation from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy where he received the honor of being named a distinguished graduate, he served the Richland County Sheriff's Department for thirteen years in such positions as court security, school resource officer, line deputy, warrant officer and investigator for financial crimes, burglary and major crimes. Chief Ewing received the first grant position for investigations of criminal domestic violence cases at Richland County. He also served as Sergeant in the Victims Assistance Unit, Major Crimes Unit, Cold Case Homicide Unit and Narcotics Unit.

Chief Ewing was sworn in as Police Chief of Bishopville on June 3, 2007. Since that time he has worked to encourage his community and police force to work hand in hand. By holding his officers to a higher standard and by implementing a number of community involvement programs, he has developed a true police-community partnership in the fight against crime. Among the programs instituted in Bishopville to promote police-community partnerships is Bishopville CARES, a program where churches and the police department provide hotel rooms, food, and help with such things as car repair for travelers in need.

Chief Ewing currently serves as Vice President of the International Association of Property Crimes Investigators and also serves on the Board for the Midlands Crimestoppers. Honors bestowed upon Chief Ewing during his seventeen-year career include Officer of the Year for the Dutch Fork Optimist Club, Investigator of the Year for the Richland County Sheriff's Department, Deputy of the Quarter in 2002, Investigator of the Year in 2002, and Outstanding Service Award for Alcohol Enforcement in 2011.

Chief Ewing graduated from the FBI Carolina Command College in 2011 and graduated from the South Carolina Police Chief's School in 2008.

Chief Ewing has a 9-year-old daughter, Lauren, and they both reside in Bishopville.

County Recipient

Commander William S. Knowles 15th Judicial Circuit Drug Enforcement Unit

William (Bill) S. Knowles began his law enforcement career in 1979 with the Horry County Police Department in the Uniform Patrol Division. In 1982, he joined the Myrtle Beach Police Department as a uniform patrol officer and worked criminal investigations. In September 1984, he went back to the Horry County Police Department as Supervisory Agent in the Homicide Division where his duties included investigation of deaths in Horry County. He was later promoted to Lieutenant as a Supervisory Agent assigned to the Narcotics Division where he was responsible for the daily supervision of 10 agents in the unit. In 1997, he was assigned to the Criminal Investigation Division and supervised 28 officers in addition to being responsible for budget preparation for the unit. In December 1999, Commander Knowles was hired by SLED to conduct complex criminal investigations and also to serve as a liaison between, state, local, and federal law enforcement.

Commander Knowles assumed his present position as Narcotics Commander for the 15th Circuit Drug Enforcement Unit in October 2005. As Commander of the unit, his responsibilities include daily supervision of three deputy commanders along with twenty-two full-time agents assigned to conduct narcotics enforcement within the 15th Judicial Circuit. He is also responsible for budget preparation and oversight of spending, and seizure accounts. Commander Knowles authored the unit's Standard Operating Procedures.

Commander Bill Knowles graduated from Conway High School, attended Horry Georgetown Technical College, graduated from SC Criminal Justice Academy. He is a 1991 graduate of the FBI National Academy. Commander Knowles has instructed other officers on a variety of topics, including homicides, crime scene, narcotics, courtroom testimony, and case file preparation. He is a former member of Myrtle Beach Police Department SWAT, SLED SWAT, and Commander of the Horry County SWAT. He has assisted FBI, DEA, U.S. Postal Service, U.S. Marshal's Office, Homeland Security in criminal investigations and internal personnel investigations.

Commander Knowles and his wife Fifi reside in Horry County. They have a son, three daughters and two granddaughters, ages 13 and 8.

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Federal Recipient

Assistant Special Agent in Charge William W. Douglas Drug Enforcement Administration

Prior to joining the DEA, ASAC Douglas worked more than twelve years as a law enforcement officer in the State of Kentucky and at the Broward County Sheriff's Office in Florida. In April 1991, ASAC Douglas was hired as a DEA Special Agent and was assigned to the Miami Field Division (FD), West Beach Resident Office. In August 1997, he transferred to the Post of Duty (POD) Task Force in Garden City, Kansas, and was instrumental in the upgrade of the POD to a Resident Office (RO) in August 2000. In September 2000, he was promoted to Resident Agent in Charge of the Garden City RO, and in September 2005 was transferred to the Special Operations Division as a Staff Coordinator. In January 2007, he was promoted to Section Chief of the Office of Investigative Technology. In January 2009, he was reassigned to the Columbia, South Carolina District Office as the Assistant Special Agent in Charge.

As the Assistant Special Agent in Charge in South Carolina, ASAC Douglas manages the five (DEA) offices within the State. ASAC Douglas oversees, directs and supervises the Columbia DO, Greenville RO, Florence RO, Charleston RO, and the Beaufort POD in carrying out criminal investigations, as well as administrative and financial functions. Since his arrival in South Carolina, ASAC Douglas has increased the manpower of each DEA office to maximize DEA's joint state and local enforcement efforts targeting drug trafficking organizations at all levels.

ASAC Douglas' interaction with federal, state and local law enforcement authorities has provided the state of South Carolina with the initiation of the Midlands High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), covering Richland and Lexington counties. In 2010, ASAC Douglas, recognizing the seriousness of the increased threat of Mexican Drug Trafficking Organizations expanding their activity into South Carolina, submitted a threat assessment for South Carolina, requesting that the South Carolina Midlands be included under the Atlanta HIDTA initiative, which encompasses Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. South Carolina was previously one of the few states in the nation without a HIDTA designation. In 2011, ASAC Douglas's efforts were rewarded when both Richland and Lexington counties were designated as part of the Atlanta HIDTA.

ASAC Douglas attended the University of Louisville and graduated from St. Thomas University, Miami, Florida, with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. He has received many awards in recognition for his dedication to drug law enforcement, including the United States Attorney's Office – Southern District of Florida Outstanding Law Enforcement Officer Award, and DEA Exceptional Performance Awards in 2002- 2005, and 2007- 2010. Will and his wife, Debbie, have one son, Brent, who is also in law enforcement in Kansas.

State Recipient

Lieutenant Richard R. Gregory South Carolina Law Enforcement Division

Lieutenant Richard R. Gregory, Sr. was born in Kershaw County. Shortly after enrolling at the University of South Carolina, he accepted a job as a Charge of Quarters with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED). After graduation from the University in December 1997 with a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, he became a Special Agent with SLED. In July 1998, he graduated from the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy and was the recipient of the J.P. Strom Award.

After working in SLED's Alcohol Enforcement Unit, he transferred to the Narcotics Unit in 2001 and was assigned to the South Carolina State Grand Jury. While working narcotics, he was a case agent and assistant case agent on many cases involving long-term investigations of multi-county narcotics trafficking organizations. In 2003, Lieutenant Gregory was assigned to SLED's Protective Services and Emergency Management Unit to assist with the increased counter terrorism responsibilities given to SLED for homeland security. In 2004, he was reassigned to the State Grand Jury to work white collar and public corruption cases. Then in March 2006, he became a Task Force Officer on the FBI's newly created Public Corruption Task Force.

During his career at SLED, Lieutenant Gregory has investigated and assisted in the prosecution of cases, including vice, alcohol violations, narcotics white collar and public corruption. While assigned to the State Grand Jury, his contributions were essential in a number of fraud, narcotics and public corruption cases.

More recently, while serving on the FBI Public Corruption Task Force, he served as a co-case agent in a three-year undercover investigation involving public corruption in Union County. He also served as a co-case agent into corrupt activities in Lee County. During this investigation, the first court-authorized wiretap of a sitting public official in South Carolina history was obtained. This case also involved the first RICO trial in this district in more than 25 years, and the first RICO conviction of a state public official in almost 18 years. Lieutenant Gregory also recently led an investigation involving a conviction of a school superintendent who embezzled more than \$700,000 from two school districts in South Carolina.

Lieutenant Gregory resides in Lugoff and has two children, Richard Ryan Gregory, Jr. and Landon Alexander Gregory.

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